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frequently the trees bore no fruit at all. But to some extent the failure of the experiment was due to psychological factors. The lack of interest in their trees which these novices in kola-nut planting still display reveals the lack of incentive for the adoption of this new, difficult, and lengthy enterprise, officially encouraged though it was. The adoption of the new cultivation ran counter to a century-old specialization and monopoly, to an organization of production which, firmly rooted in legends and religious practice, has come to be accepted by the people as part and parcel of that inert, unalterable, entity: their culture—a point to which we shall return.

Locust-bean Tree

This is one of the most important trees in Nupe. It grows both inside the town and in the open bush. Every part of its fruit is utilized. The pods (*elo*) are sold, in large basketfuls in the markets of Bida. Both the whole fruits and the empty skins are marketed. The infusion of the skins, a black sticky liquid (*longoro* in Nupe, *mákuba* in Hausa), is used as dye for pottery, leather and woodwork, also as ink, and for staining and making ant-proof timber-rafters, walls, and floors; it gives them that neat polished appearance as if they had been treated with tar. A yellow powder found inside the pods (*elo nuwã*) is used to sweeten milk, water, and other drinks. The fermented seeds (*elo kosũ*), pounded and kneaded into small flat cakes (*kula*), are sold on the markets; strongly tasting, and even more strongly smelling, they form an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking, being used to flavour practically every dish. The fruits of the locust-bean tree are plucked by the women, with the help of long poles which have a forked piece of wood, almost like a pair of shears, tied to the top.

Shea-nut Tree

No less important than the locust-bean tree, the shea-nut tree grows wild everywhere in the thin bush country. The picking of the fruits is again women's work. Small groups of women go out together, help each other, and eventually divide the fruits which they have gathered. The women rarely stray very far from roads and paths, and never into the uninhabited bush. The fruit, *ekó*, is either sold to the trading-companies or manufactured by the women themselves into shea-butter, an important fat in Nupe cooking, and an important commodity in the markets of the country. The shea-nuts intended for export are first dried in the sun or in the roast-ovens described above. Shea-butter (*emikote*) is prepared in the following fashion:

After having been dried thoroughly, the nuts are shelled by hand. As a rule this lengthy work is left for one day, and next morning the inner, finer skin is peeled off and the nuts are pounded in a mortar to a coarse-grained flour. Plenty of water is added, and the dough is kneaded with hands and feet for a whole day. In the evening the preparation is covered and left standing overnight. On the next day the dough is transferred into a big clay pot. A little water is added and the pot put on the fire, where it is left boiling for the whole day. During the boiling the pure fat comes to

Nigeria: Pottery. **Nicholson.**

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—Man, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Duká-agetã* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunya*—Man 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

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303 suitable piece of the local sandstone or ironstone which may be found is used as beater without artificial shaping.

(*b*) when the pancake becomes sufficiently thin it is placed on the bottom of a small inverted pot and beaten again with the hand-beater to make it slightly convex.

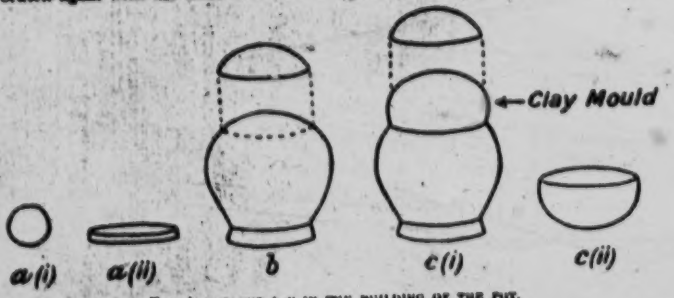

FIG. 1. STAGES A-C IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*c*) A clay mould is then placed upon the inverted pot and the clay beaten over this until it is shaped like an inverted bowl (*c* (i)).

It is then removed, turned over and put on one side to dry (*c* (ii)), and is eventually used as one half of the finished article.

(*d*) Processes (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) are repeated and a second bowl identical in size with the first is made to form the second half. When both halves have been allowed to harden a little, one is inverted and superimposed on the other so that the edges coincide. The operator cements the two halves together by smearing clay round the line of junction so that a hollow ball, like a flattened sphere, is produced without any orifice.

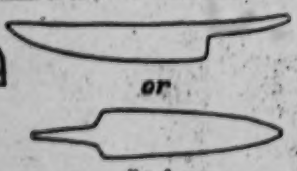

FIG. 2.

(*e*) A small hole, 2 inches in diameter, is cut in the centre of the top with an iron knife.

(*f*) To put the mouth on the pot, the operator takes a thin roll of clay and fits it to the edge of the hole by manipulation with the right hand while the pot is rotated by the left. The lip is shaped between the thumb and finger of the right hand and polished with a wetted rag.

(*g*) A thin roll of clay is then kneaded on to the pot to form a shoulder and the polishing with the wet rag continued.

(*h*) One or two handles are now attached; the operator takes a roll of clay of suitable length, attaches it first to the body of the pot, gives it an outward curve and attaches the other end to the mouth.

FIG. 3. STAGES *d*-*h* IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*j*) The exterior of the pot is polished by rubbing with a smooth, water-worn pebble (? of quartzite) and a piece of wetted rag.